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241500Z Mar 05

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 001726

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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

THURSDAY, MARCH 24, 2005

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE
THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

Schroeder Sees No Progress in Turkish Reforms - Milliyet
Turkish Journalists March on Ankara to Protest New Penal
Code - Milliyet
Sunnis To Be Given Defense Ministry in Iraq - Sabah
80 Insurgents Killed in Iraq - Aksam
Young Russians Prefer 'Walking Without Putin' - Aksam
IMF May Visit Turkey to Update Letter of Intent - Hurriyet

OPINION MAKERS

International Press Institute (IPI) Criticizes New Penal
Code - Radikal
Jordanian King Abdullah Criticizes Syria, Hizbullah - Zaman
Damascus Caught Between Reforms, Oppressive Regime -
Cumhuriyet
EU Won't Veto Wolfowitz for World Bank - Radikal
Blair to Announce election Date Soon - Yeni Safak
Putin to Meet Sharon on Historic Visit to Israel -
Cumhuriyet
Tough US Measures for Inflation Shake Markets - Zaman
Kaddafi: UN Security Council a Terrorist Organization -
Cumhuriyet
Kyrgyzstan Dragged Into Civil War - Yeni Safak

BRIEFING

TGS Chief Says Military, MFA in Harmony: Turkish Chief of
General Staff, General Hilmi Ozkok ruled out any
disagreement between the military and the Turkish Ministry
of Foreign Affairs (MFA) regarding Turkey's Iraq policy.
General Ozkok spoke with reporters at a reception in Ankara
on Wednesday. Ozkok said that, contrary to the view
expressed by Land Forces Commander General Buyukanit, Turkey
has a clear policy on Iraq and is making an effort to keep
in step with the 'intensive changes' that are taking place
in that country. (Buyukanit had accused the government of
having 'no Iraq policy.').

Flag Burning Attempt Draws Reactions: Police detained two
children aged 12 and 14 in connection with the burning of a
Turkish flag during the traditional Kurdish holiday of
'Nevruz' celebrations organized by pro-Kurdish DEHAP last
weekend. The rally and flag burning angered the military,
the government and other political parties. Businesses and
citizens began hanging Turkish flags on buildings all across
the country in a show of solidarity. Turkey's broadcasting
watchdog RTUK called on all TV stations to display a flag on
their screens during normal programming.

AKP Official Attends Panel on US-Turkey Ties: AK Party
deputy chairman Murat Mercan told a panel meeting at the
American Enterprise Institute (AEI) in Washington that he
saw no differences between Turkish and US views on Iran and
Syria. Mercan joined former Pentagon advisor Richard Perle,
The Wall Street Journal's Robert Pollock, and AEI's Michael
Rubin on the panel. Mercan said that Washington's request
to establish a logistical hub at Incirlik Airbase would be
answered 'very soon.' He said the AKP government is seeking
to advance its common goals with Washington, and warned that
those who are firmly anti-American and anti-Semitic will
prevail if the 'big picture' is missed. Rubin said that the
PKK should be removed in northern Iraq, and advised
Washington to ban organizations in the US that are
affiliated with the PKK.

SCIRI's Hakim Issues Messages in Ankara: Ammar al-Hakim
from The Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq
(SCIRI) told the private broadcaster NTV on Wednesday that
Kurds and Shiites in Iraq have agreed to include all Iraqi

groups, including the Turkmen, in the new Iraqi government. Hakim asked that everyone respect the Islamic identity of Iraq, but said the Iraqis would not seek to establish an Islamic administration. The SCIRI is opposed to having militia forces in Iraq, Hakim stressed, and called on Kurdish militia groups (the peshmerge) and the Badr Brigades to join the new Iraqi army. Hakim brought a message from Grand Ayatollah Al-Sayyid Ali al-Sistani, the spiritual leader of the Iraqi Shiites, to Ankara asking Turkey to promote good bilateral relations with Iraq.

Erdogan to the US in June: PM Tayyip Erdogan is planning to visit the United States in June, at which time he may also meet with President Bush, "Zaman" reports. The visit would be aimed at repairing the strains in Turkey-US relations. Erdogan plans to participate in his daughter's graduation ceremony at Indiana University, and may also call on Governor Schwarzenegger in California, according to the report.

Greek Prime Minister to Visit Turkey: Greek PM Kostas Karamanlis has accepted his PM Erdogan's invitation for an official visit to Ankara in coming months, "Sabah" reports. Karamanlis, the first Greek prime minister to visit Turkey in 50 years, is expected in Ankara after Turkey signs an additional protocol to include Cyprus in its customs union agreement with the European Union.

Talabani Says He Will Allow Reopening of Turkish Consulate in Mosul: Northern Iraqi Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) leader Jalal Talabani, a leading candidate for the Iraqi presidency, said that, if elected, he will allow the Turkish consulate in Mosul to reopen. The Consulate was forced to close by Saddam Hussein in 1995.

EDITORIAL OPINION: Kyrgyzstan; UN Reform; US-Turkey

"The Breaking Point in Kyrgyzstan"
Mustafa Balbay wrote in the leftist-nationalist "Cumhuriyet" (3/24): "The current situation in Kyrgyzstan is similar to recent events in Ukraine and Georgia. After the demise of the Soviet Union, independent Turkic republics emerged and achieved independence. Today they seem to be engaged in an effort to reshape their future. Turkey has significant experience in this process as it went through a series of similar events following the war of independence. This is not an easy task for the Turkic republics, especially given the efforts of outsiders -- the US, the EU, Russia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and China -- to exert their influence. .. The US has developed its relations with Kyrgyzstan in a comprehensive way, including security and economic dimensions, and wants to do even more. Currently the number of US troops in Kyrgyzstan is nearly 5,000. But Russia remains influential in the capital. A few months ago Bishkek and Moscow decided to enhance their ties, a move that was not viewed positively in Washington. Kyrgyzstan is also a member of the Organization of Shanghai Cooperation. Therefore, the internal balances in this country are very important in the race for influence in the Central Asian region."

"UN Reform"
Yalim Eralp opined in the conservative "DB Tercuman" (3/24): "There is a general consensus on the need to reform the UN to adapt the international body to current conditions. The former Foreign Minister of France has agreed that the status quo is not acceptable. .. But disagreements occur over the kind of reform that is best for the UN. Kofi Annan recently presented a report with some advice on this issue. Naturally, the member countries will decide on the course of UN reforms. The smaller member countries are pushing for a 'democratization' of the Security Council structure, but at the same time they do not want the UN to interfere in their internal affairs. The bigger countries are asking for just the opposite. In fact, the main question is whether the member countries want to live in a world with established and enforced rules. Compared to the past, international norms are more strictly enforced than they have been. However, every country wants to redefine the norms based on its national policy. Reform can be implemented at the UN, but if countries do not change their mentality and policies, they will be insufficient."

"The Wrong Tactic"
Fehmi Koru argued in the Islamist-intellectual "Yeni Safak" (3/24): "The US is once again making a mistake in its effort to carry out 'psychological warfare' against Turkey rather than voicing its requests and expectations in a direct and acceptable manner. This method was used in the run-up to the March 1 parliamentary motion, and that experience should have provided an unforgettable lesson. Yet it seems Washington did not learn the lesson properly, as it insists on repeating the same mistakes. .. Washington is not making its demands in a clear way. Instead, it is trying to change our politicians' views and positions by using its media."

Let me give the US a friendly warning: it will be very difficult for the US to get any results by using these same useless methods. Those who try to influence Turkey no longer have credibility here, so it won't matter what they write or what they say. The Turkish people tend not to forget the lessons of the past. The Americans' psychological war in Turkey has not been forgotten either. Doing the same thing again will only create greater reactions against the US."

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